

**From:** Michelle Olson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 30, 2018 3:22 PM  
**To:** Fiegen, Kristie  
**Subject:** [EXT] Questions about Prevailing Winds approval

Hello, I am a concerned citizen with questions regarding the PUC's recent decision to approve Prevailing Wind's application. I am not sure if you are able to respond to these questions, but if you are able to provide clarification on some specific points that would be greatly appreciated.

My first question is: **what are the exact set points you used in deciding whether or not the proposed Prevailing Winds wind farm posed a threat of serious injury to the social conditions of the inhabitants in the area?** My father, [REDACTED] gave testimony about the very serious injury that the proposed wind farm has caused to our family. I am sure you all remember the testimony but to give some background context my brother, [REDACTED], is a landowner who intends to have wind towers on his property. These wind towers will surround my father's property that includes his home and business. My father is opposed to these wind towers for many reasons but I will particularly focus on the negative health aspects, social harm and damage to his business. I have tried to remain neutral as I love both my father and brother dearly, however as you can imagine this has caused a deep divide in our once very close-knit family. Lines have been drawn and sides have been taken. Our family will never be the same. In fact, recently at Thanksgiving we were no longer able to celebrate all together because of the significant social damage that the wind tower controversy has caused to my family. At my children's birthday parties I will have to decide between my brother and father on who can attend. And so on and so forth at every family event. So let me assure you the social damage to our family that this has caused is absolutely without a doubt irreparable. It is my understanding that the burden of proof is on Prevailing Winds to establish that they have not caused serious injury to the social conditions of inhabitants, is this not correct? So if one family's complete destruction is not enough, how many does it take? Is it a percentage- say over 50% of families have to be destroyed? Or is it more of a legal issue- maybe someone has to have been charged with a criminal offense related to the issues? To restate my initial question- What exact qualifications did you use to come to the conclusion that Prevailing Winds (whom the burden of proof lies with) has proved that serious social harm has not take place?

My second question is **what factors led to your decision to decide that there was no serious harm to the economic condition of inhabitants?** Testimony was given by my father about the economic harm that will come to his business, backed up by statements from his clients. Several others also provided testimony regarding the economic impact as well. Obviously economic harm will only take place if the wind towers are actually constructed, so this is something that is difficult to prove at this point. So, with your approval of this application- who is liable for monetary damages if serious economic harm does happen to the inhabitants (loss of business revenue, declining property value, etc.)? Is the PUC


liable because with their approval they are saying that Prevailing Winds proved they wouldn't cause economic harm? Or is Prevailing Winds liable because they "will comply with all applicable laws and rules"?

My next question is: **if Prevailing winds has the burden of proof to establish that they will not impair the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants why are they not required to do actual studies into some of the negative health issues that have been brought up?** It seems to me that the burden of proof has instead been shifted to those that are suffering to prove that their health concerns are serious enough. In the medical world it takes a long time with a lot of peer reviewed studies to update guidelines and regulations. Do you remember thalidomide, a medication once thought to be a safe "miracle cure" for nausea that for years resulted in children dying or being born with severe defects until it was eventually deemed unsafe for pregnant women? Do you remember when cigarette smoking was once considered completely safe? In my short ten years in the medical world I have already seen many guidelines changed, and medications once thought safe now discontinued or restricted. I can certainly understand your predicament in determining if the health concerns are legitimate for the exact reasons listed above. Changing medical recommendations takes a long time, and unfortunately a lot of people are seriously harmed in the meantime before change takes place. If serious health related harm related to wind towers does become established at a later point, are the wind companies that already have existing facilities liable for the damage since they assured the public of their safety? If they are not liable- who is?

Finally, I have to ask **why a setback of 2-3 miles, as requested by many that were opposed, was not considered as a condition of approval?** It seems to me that this would have been a compromise on both parts. It certainly would NOT have fixed the irreparable damage to my family, but it may have helped with many of the other concerns of non-participating landowners.

In closing, I would just like to say that I truly do understand the difficult position you have with trying to balance the positives of wind energy vs the safety and well being of the people of South Dakota. I am sure my above statements might seem otherwise, but i am not completely opposed to wind energy. I just think it should be done in a safe, fair and reasonable manner with as little harm as possible to the people of South Dakota. In this particular case I think the harms of the proposed Prevailing Winds project far outweigh the positives. Furthermore, I think the people in this area have done their due diligence with renewable energy. We already have the Beethoven Wind project in this area. Also located nearby is the Fort Randall Dam, which has the capability to produce significant hydroelectric power that could potentially supply up to 245,000 households (far far more than the households in the counties affected by this project!). Both of these projects were not without controversy when they were first constructed. So why do the people of this area have to continue to bear the burden? How about the areas in our state that have little to no sources of renewable energy. Since the law changed, the small rural school districts that were promised economic benefits from these wind farms no longer receive what they were promised.

Anyways, if you have read this far without deleting thank you very much. I hope you are able to answer my questions but even if you are not able to respond, I appreciate you taking my concerns into consideration.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Powers Olson  
  
Avon, SD

*SDCL 49-41B-22 provides that the Applicant has the burden of proof to establish that:  
(1) The proposed facility will comply with all applicable laws and rules;*

- (2) The facility will not pose a threat of serious injury to the environment nor to the social and economic condition of inhabitants or expected inhabitants in the siting area;*
- (3) The facility will not substantially impair the health, safety or welfare of the inhabitants; and*
- (4) The facility will not unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region with due consideration having been given the views of governing bodies of affected local units of government.*

Sent from my iPhone